



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner

NEWS RELEASE

September 9, 2013

Arkansas Teacher of the Year Regional Finalists Announced

LITTLE ROCK – Sixteen of the best teachers from around the state will be recognized as Arkansas Teacher of the Year Regional Finalists at 10 a.m. Sept. 16 in the Old Supreme Court Room at the Capitol. The top four finalists will be announced at the event.

"Teachers are the backbone of education not only here in Arkansas, but around the world," said Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell. "We take great pride in honoring a few of them today for their hard work, dedication and passion for education."

The 16 regional finalists are as follows:

- **Christina Bishop**, a third-grade math and science teacher at Gardner Math, Science, Technology Magnet School in the Hot Springs School District.
- **Tami Blair**, a 10th through 12th-grade life science teacher at Arkansas High School in the Texarkana Arkansas School District.
- **Donna Boyd**, a kindergarten teacher at Eastside Elementary School in the Magnolia School District.
- **Holly Brown**, a third-grade teacher at Terry Elementary School in the Little Rock School District.
- **Jonathan Crossley**, an 11th and 12th-grade English teacher at Palestine Wheatley High School in the Palestine Wheatley School District.
- **Lisa Gray**, a kindergarten through second-grade literacy teacher at Sunnymede Elementary School in the Fort Smith School District.
- **Julie Hilton**, a fourth-grade teacher at London Elementary School in the Russellville School District.
- **Sue Johnston**, a first-grade teacher at Eagle Mountain Magnet School in the Batesville School District.
- **Debra Lamb**, a 10th through 12th-grade environmental and special technology teacher at Har-Ber High School in the Springdale School District.
- **Kimberly Luellen**, an eighth-grade literacy teacher at Blytheville Middle School in the Blytheville School District.
- **Laura Beth Place**, a 10th through 12th-grade math teacher at Dumas New Tech High School in the Dumas School District.

- **Ashlee Roberts**, a fourth-grade teacher at H.L. Lubker Elementary School in the Bald Knob School District.
- **Misty Russell**, a kindergarten teacher at Margaret Daniel Primary School in the Ashdown School District.
- **Hollie Thielemier**, a fifth-grade math teacher at Walnut Ridge Middle School in the Lawrence County School District.
- **Jenny Tucker**, a first-grade teacher at 34th Avenue Elementary School in the Pine Bluff School District.
- **Waynetta Villines**, a ninth through 12th-grade social studies teacher at Jasper High School in the Jasper School District.

The ATOY competition is part of the National Teacher of the Year Program, which began in 1952. Each year, teachers are nominated and selected for the award based on their teaching skills and dedication to students, parents and colleagues. Those recognized demonstrate school and community leadership and inspire students of all backgrounds.

The Walton Family Foundation, a long-time supporter of the program, is providing a grant allowing for the 16 regional finalists to each receive a \$1,000 check. The ATOY Selection Review Committee will conduct classroom site visits with the four state semifinalists. A surprise notification visit will accompany the announcement of the 2014 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

For more information, go to

<http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/communications/teacher-of-the-year>.

ArkansasEd.org

Arkansas Department of Education | Four Capitol Mall | Little Rock, AR 72201

